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BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

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The Anti-Slavery Reporter.

JUNE—JULY, 1908.

[*The Editor, whilst grateful to all correspondents who may be kind enough to furnish him with information, desires to state that he is not responsible for the views stated by them, nor for quotations which may be inserted from other journals. The object of the REPORTER is to spread information, and articles are necessarily quoted which may contain views or statements for which their authors can alone be held responsible.]*

Slave Labour in Portuguese West Africa.

THE following correspondence has taken place with the Foreign Office:—

May, 11th, 1908.

TO THE RIGHT HON. SIR EDWARD GREY, BART., M.P., ETC.

SIR,—On the 11th of January last I had the honour to forward to you a copy of a letter which had been addressed by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to the Secretary of the Portuguese Legation in London in regard to the Labour system in the Colony of Angola and the islands of San Thomé and Principe, and the investigation which had been promised by the Government of Portugal with a view to effecting much-needed reforms especially in the system of recruiting the Serviçaes from the interior and their repatriation at the end of their term.

I am directed by my Committee to ask whether His Majesty's Government have been in further communication with the Portuguese Government in regard to these reforms, and if they have received information as to practical measures being taken to carry out the thorough investigation promised; whether a Government official was sent to West Africa to organize a new recruiting system, and what results have followed from any action which has been taken to inaugurate improvements.

My Committee has purposely refrained from making earlier inquiry on this matter in view of recent events in Portugal and the unsettled state of public affairs there, but it regards the question as one of the highest importance and is extremely anxious to know whether the present

Ministry is taking serious steps to follow up the policy outlined by the previous Administration.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) TRAVERS BUXTON,

Secretary.

TO THE SECRETARY,

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

May 21st, 1908.

SIR,—I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant enquiring whether His Majesty's Government have received any further information respecting the proposed reforms in connection with contract labour in Portuguese West Africa.

I am to inform you, in reply, that Lieutenant Captain Francisco Paula Cid, of the Portuguese Navy, formerly Governor of the District of Benguela, of the Province of Cape Verde and S. Thomé and Principe, has been instructed by the Portuguese Government to proceed to the Islands and to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the conditions of labour there, especially as regards repatriation and re-engagement. He will afterwards visit Angola, and enquire into the whole system of recruitment, carrying out his enquiries, not only at the place of emigration, but also in the localities where engagements take place, inspecting the roads generally followed by caravans, and satisfying himself that no deception is practised upon the labourers engaged. Having concluded these investigations he will draw up reports which will enable the Portuguese Government to consider whether the regulations in force are sufficient, and if not what measures should be adopted in order to ensure respect for the rights and liberty of the natives.

The late Government had intended to begin by preparing a new règlement. This intention has now been modified in the direction indicated, the present Government being of opinion that it will be preferable to obtain more precise and practical knowledge of requirements before a revision of the regulations is attempted.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

June 11th, 1908.

To the UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE,

Foreign Office.

SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge your letter in regard to the

proposals of the Portuguese Government in connection with the contract labour system in Portuguese West Africa.

I am directed by my Committee to express their regret at learning that the officer named in your letter has only now received instructions to go out to Angola and the Islands to make the investigation which was promised several months ago, and that the Portuguese Government, instead of introducing fresh regulations, only propose (after extensive inquiries have been made and reports drawn up) to consider whether the regulations now in force are sufficient to secure the well-being of the natives.

I am to point out that the Portuguese Government can hardly fail to be already acquainted with the working of the existing labour system in the Islands, and that the need for drastic reform in the irresponsible method of so-called recruitment of the Serviçais, which the late Government undertook, in an interview given to representatives of the English cocoa firms, to replace by "a proper Government system," as well as their repatriation, is urgent.

From information lately received by the Society from a trustworthy source, they are given to understand that the purchase of people by the traders is beginning to go on with increased activity.

I am respectfully to ask that His Majesty's Government will obtain from the Portuguese Government, before the end of the year, a report as to the repatriation of the labourers who were introduced under the new regulations of 1903 on contracts for five years, and whose engagement therefore comes to an end this summer, and the exact number of labourers repatriated.

My Committee are unable to regard with satisfaction the appointment of the official mentioned in your letter, who, as a former Governor of Benguela and the Islands, cannot be expected to be without bias on the question.

They also feel that the measures which are now contemplated hold out a further prospect of protracted delays and adjournments of any real settlement of the matter, instead of the decisive steps towards reform for which we were led to look, and my Committee venture to hope that His Majesty's Government will urge upon the Government of Portugal the necessity of prompt and strong measures to check the traffic in slave labourers which is regularly carried on from the interior, and to put the labour system of Angola, the evils of which are indisputable, on an entirely new basis.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) TRAVERS BUXTON, Secretary.

FOREIGN OFFICE, June 27th, 1908.

SIR,—I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th inst., respecting contract labour in Portuguese West Africa.

I am to inform you, in reply, that H.M. Minister at Lisbon has already represented to the Portuguese Government that, as the investigations of Captain Paula Cid must necessarily take time, and some further period must also be required for the preparation of the report and its examination at Lisbon, it is very important that steps should be taken during the enquiry to remedy any shortcomings which may be found to exist in the administration of the present regulations in regard to contract labour.

I am to add that your suggestion that a report should be obtained as to the re-patriation of labourers under the 1903 regulations, will be borne in mind.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

TO THE SECRETARY,

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

In view of the inconclusive and dilatory measures which, as indicated by the above correspondence, the Portuguese Government propose, the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society has resolved to hold a Conference in Westminster, in the third week of October next, to which representatives of Missionary and other religious and philanthropic Societies, Members of Parliament, and other leaders of thought and public opinion are being invited, in order to consider what steps can be usefully taken to deal with the present serious state of things, and press for much needed reforms. Representatives of the leading cocoa firms, who have interested themselves so deeply in the subject, have promised to attend. Encouraging replies have already been received by the Committee, and we hope, in our next issue, to give full particulars regarding the Conference.

Questions on the subject of this Portuguese labour were put in the House of Commons, on June 18th, when Sir Edward Grey stated the substance of the above replies.

In a letter dated April 20th last, Mr. Stober wrote from Cabinda to the magazine of the Angola Evangelical Mission:—

“Santo Thomé continues heavily upon our hearts. The stream of life taken there shows no abatement, 400, and as many as 600 souls, being carried by some steamers, and there are three steamers each month.

Though at times the thoughts of our poor fellow-creatures on these cocoa plantations cause us to feel weak and faint, and to almost despair, yet we are comforted in God, Who we are assured will send deliverance for them."



The Slave Trade into Tripoli.

OUR Society, acting in concert with the Anti-Slavery Societies of Italy and France, has tried to obtain the discussion of this question and the resolutions of the Rome Congress thereon, at the Arms Conference which is being held in Brussels. It will be seen, however, from the correspondence which follows, that this has not been possible, owing to objections being raised by the representatives of some of the Powers represented to the introduction of what was considered an extraneous question.

The Societies will therefore have to take other means of bringing these abuses of the Brussels Act before the Powers concerned.

22nd May, 1908.

TO THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE,
FOREIGN OFFICE.

SIR,—In the letter from the Foreign Office addressed to me on the 4th of March last, it was stated that H.M. Government would bear in mind the representations of our Society as to the raising of the question of the slave trade from Central Africa into Tripoli at the Conference now being held at Brussels on the question of Arms, in case the other Powers concerned were willing to enlarge the scope of the conference.

We have to-day learnt from Rome, that the Italian Minister at Brussels has received instructions from his Government to support the petition presented by the Italian Anti-Slavery Society to make known to the assembled Powers the resolutions of the Anti-Slavery Congress at Rome on this subject.

I beg leave on behalf of the Committee of this Society, respectfully to express the hope that this decision of the Government of Italy may facilitate the inclusion of this question among those to be considered in the present Conference, and that H.M. Government may be able to bring their influence successfully to bear in favour of its consideration by the signatory Powers of the Brussels Act on this occasion.

I have, etc.,

(Signed) TRAVERS BUXTON,

Secretary.

[JUNE-JULY, 1908.]

FOREIGN OFFICE,

June 10th, 1908.

SIR,—I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd ultimo, relative to the question of the discussion of the Central African-Tripoli slave trade at the Arms Conference now sitting at Brussels.

I am to inform you, in reply, that while His Majesty's Government would be prepared to see this question discussed at the Conference, should the other Powers concerned be prepared to do so, they yet remain of the opinion, already expressed in my letter of March 4th last, that it is most desirable to avoid taking any action which might imperil the object for which the Conference was summoned.

Sir Edward Grey does not understand that the instructions sent to the Italian Minister at Brussels indicate that he is to urge upon the Conference the consideration of the Tripoli slave-trade, and there is in any case reason to believe that some of the delegates would negative any proposals to discuss extraneous questions.

I am accordingly to express Sir Edward Grey's regret that it does not appear practicable to secure a discussion on this point at the present Conference.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) W. LANGLEY.

To the Secretary,

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

As regards the traffic in slaves from the Tripoli ports, the Foreign Office has received a despatch from Mr. Alvarez, H.M. Consul General at Tripoli, dealing with the extracts from the reports of the Agents of the Italian Anti-Slavery Society, which were sent to Sir E. Grey in March last. Mr. Alvarez traverses several of the statements made which he is unable to verify, and some of which he has been informed are untrue.

We are in communication with the Italian Anti-Slavery Society on the subject.

A later report received by that Society from their Agent at Benghasi in May, states that a Turkish vessel, the *Hodeda*, recently left that port for Constantinople with fourteen slave children, thirteen girls and one boy, on board. This ship was bound for Constantinople direct, without making any stay at Smyrna or Canea. Information had been sent to the Italian Embassy at Constantinople. The Agent declares that the notion that the slave trade is much diminished, is wholly inaccurate; it will go on until the European Powers take steps to stop it. There is great need for further

watching the harbours of Tobrouk and Bomba where a terrible trade in slaves from Koufra is carried on.

Our Committee has had the great advantage of a visit from M. le Baron du Teil, Secretary-General of the Anti-Slavery Society of France and a Corresponding Member of our Society. The Baron was welcomed by our President, at a meeting of the Committee on June 25th, when he read an interesting *r  sum  * of the action taken by the French Society regarding the slave trade from the Central Soudan to Tripoli. It will be remembered that our Society has co-operated with that of France in this question, and the value of such joint action between the sister Societies in the two countries, of which the gracious visit of the French Secretary-General is an outward sign, will be fully appreciated in England.

Baron du Teil also reported the lamented death of Captain Mangin, the French officer who gave important information of the slave traffic carried on by the Senoussi in Borkou and elsewhere. Captain Mangin was killed on June 14th, when fighting against the Moors at El Moinan in Mauretania. *Le Temps* states that attacks on the French troops are becoming more frequent in that region, and that Ma El Ainin, the Shaik of the "blue men" (of whose slave-dealing exploits we heard last year), has sent large quantities of arms to the Moorish tribes on the right bank of the Senegal River.

Slave Trade Papers.

THIS annual volume, published in accordance with the provisions of the Brussels Act, contains, as usual, sundry papers relating to the slave trade and slavery, and the trade in firearms and liquor in different parts of Africa.

The report of the International Maritime Bureau for 1907, signed by Mr. Consul Cave, its president, states that on the East Coast of Africa there have been no prosecutions during the year for breaches of the laws against slave trading. He submits that

"This is a further proof that this hateful traffic is definitely suppressed in these waters. It is perhaps possible—though it seems to me highly improbable—that very rare cases might still occur of individual negroes being kidnapped in order to be taken by boat to the Arabian coast, but the watch kept by the land authorities and the ships of war is so strict that they would certainly be discovered."

Sundry papers relating to slavery in Northern Nigeria, British East Africa and the Egyptian Soudan are reproduced, of which we have already taken notice at the time of their appearance.

A long official report from the Italian colony of Erythrea gives details of applications for freedom and the liberation of male and female slaves in the years 1905 and 1906. It is maintained that the provisions of the Brussels Act have been diligently carried out, and that, speaking generally, no slaves can be kept in bondage by force. A watchful eye is kept by the authorities over the interior of the colony; special posts have been established and activity redoubled in the Rasciaida country. The report for 1906 is thus summed up:—

"The number of slaves freed during 1906 was 35, as against 29 in 1905. Of these 8 were already in the colony, while 27 came there as fugitives from countries beyond the frontier or from over sea. . . . Only one case of attempted slave trading is reported. In 3 of the 8 cases mentioned above the freed slaves wished to go on living with their old masters. These records prove that the feeling of the civil personality and the consciousness of the rights of the individual are progressing not only in the colony, but also beyond its frontiers. If an isolated case of slave trading may still occur in our territory, we must at the same time recognise that the plague of slavery as such is radically cured. Investigation of the fact shows with what zeal all the colonial authorities have given themselves up to carrying out the eminently humanitarian work of the Brussels Act."

Lists are given of slaves freed in the Italian colony of Benadir and in German East Africa, and 311 negroes are said to have been freed during the years 1905-6 by the Turkish authorities of Benghazi.

Some extracts from a report of 1907 by the Secretaries-General of the Congo State relate to the charge that the slave trade has been tolerated on Congo territory. The report declares that "the whole history of the State protests against this unjustifiable accusation," and boasts in characteristic terms of the victory accomplished for civilisation by the suppression of this scourge of Africa. If cases of slave trading have occurred on the Congo frontiers it is contended that the State cannot be blamed, as it takes all possible measures to prevent them; the slave dealers often act in concert with the village chiefs, with whom they exchange arms, powder and alcohol.

With this official report it is instructive to compare an account, referred to on another page, which has recently been sent to the Congo Reform Association by the American missionaries at Luebo, in the Upper Kasai, describing the raid carried out by Congo Government troops in that district for Baluba labourers.

An interesting report on the slave trade in Persia, dated January 1907, states that there is now hardly any trade in slaves in Arabistan. The slavery there would be more correctly described as serfage. The serfs are, as a rule, not ill-treated by their masters, who often employ them in confidential posts. The trade is, however, carried on on a somewhat large

scale in certain districts of the south, notably on the coast of the Mekran, where slaves are exchanged for arms imported by fraud. Nomad tribes throw themselves at night upon the villages, which they despoil, and seize the women and children in order to sell them. Slaves, too, are not seldom found enrolled among the regular crew of Arab sailing ships. They are then surreptitiously landed at a southern port, most of them being employed for the pearl fisheries. Three officials are named as having taken part in the slave trade. Another report on the same subject, from the Provincial Director of Customs, states that the slave trade is but little carried on in places where the customs are in operation—especially in the Bender-Abbas and Lingah districts—but there are still a large number of slaves—about 2,000—some of whom were purchased when the trade was carried on without opposition, and mostly imported from Zanzibar; others are descendants of slaves imported long ago. Thanks to the vigilance of Government agents and to the protection afforded by British authorities in that district, the trade is in a fair way to disappear altogether. Any slave who desires help and protection can get it from the British Consular agents, who are willing to give moral and financial support to slaves until they can obtain full liberty. Slaves are occasionally still imported along the coast of Chibkouh, and it is difficult to discover those who are thus introduced. In the northern part of the Persian Gulf things are as they have always been: domestic slaves are well treated.

The trade in slaves is heaviest in Beloochistan, and it is said that about 1,200 are exported every year. The trade to the coast of Oman is carried out with great ease owing to the absence of Customs' officers. Slaves are exchanged for arms, and it is said that all the Serdars of Beloochistan, some of whose names are given, are implicated in the traffic. Children of poor families are seized as slaves for debt. The coast of Mekran is without a guard of any kind, and the trade is thus easily carried on. The trade in the Jask region has diminished, but the Governor is believed to be only ostensibly opposed to it. The report ends with the remark that the traffic would be suppressed as soon as the administration decreed the seizing of the ports of Beloochistan, provided that the government of the different provinces of the Persian Gulf were entrusted to a single responsible Governor appointed by the Government.

This volume contains the regulations for native labour in the territory of the Mozambique Company, which appear to be on the lines of the Portuguese Native Labour Decree of 1889, as quoted in the *Memoire Justificatif*, published in 1906. Every native is declared to be morally and legally bound to work for the means of existence, and, failing his willingness to comply with this rule, he can be compelled by public authority, but he is

free to choose the method of employment. The possessors of capital or property and persons engaged in professional and commercial pursuits, &c., are exempt, as also are women, men over 60 and under 14, and certain other persons. Land may be granted to natives for cultivation under certain conditions.

Natives have the right to enter into labour contracts in conformity with the civil code and special regulations, which can be concluded with or without the intervention of the public authority. In the former case the authority will take means to ensure the performance of the contract. Contracts for service outside Mozambique must be concluded through the curators; contracts must be entered into by free consent of the parties, and must not exceed 5 years. Employers must care for the labourers in sickness, provide suitable lodging, and must not hold back wages. Ill-treatment, chains, handcuffs, &c., are prohibited. Several articles relate to infractions of contracts by either of the parties and penalties therefor.

The objection to Portuguese labour laws is not they are not excellent in terms, but that they are too often neglected in practice and remain a dead letter. It is known, however, that in Mozambique the conditions of labour are quite different from those obtaining in Angola. Natives of the eastern colony are said to be ready to volunteer for work, and they return to their homes when their contracts expire.

Slavery in Zanzibar and Pemba.

WE are glad to be permitted to publish the following letter, which has been received from the Foreign Office by Mr. E. W. Brooks, Hon. Secretary of the Friends' Anti-Slavery Committee, on this subject.

It will be remembered that the Abolition Ordinance of last year began with the words: "From and after October 1st, 1907, the legal status of slavery shall be and remain abolished throughout the Protectorate." We now learn that the Government have sent out instructions for the assimilation of the state of things in the Islands to that prevailing on the Mainland, and that slavery will accordingly be definitely abolished.

FOREIGN OFFICE,

May 26th, 1908.

SIR,—I am directed by Secretary Sir Edward Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your two letters received here on the 11th instant relative to the question of the continued existence of Slavery in the Zanzibar Protectorate.

I am to inform you that it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to introduce into the Islands the system now in force on the Mainland, and instructions have already been sent to His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General for the preparation of the measures necessary to carry out this intention.

I am, etc.,

(Signed) W. Langley.

E. W. Brooks, Esq.

Egypt and the Soudan.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPER. *

In the annual report on Egypt and the Soudan in 1907, Sir Eldon Gorst states that the Soudan is making steady progress, and he is confident that the existing system of administration is the one most calculated to promote the welfare of the inhabitants. He remarks upon the good hold which the English officials have gained over the heterogeneous peoples whom they govern.

The external difficulties of the Government have been diminished by the withdrawal of the Belgian troops from the south-western districts of the Bahr-el-Ghazal province, the settlement of the frontiers of Abyssinia and Uganda, and a better understanding as to the Darfour frontier. But with a frontier so extended to watch as that of the Soudan, which stretches for some 4,000 miles, exclusive of Egyptian and maritime boundaries, and considering the wild tribes beyond it, it is not surprising that raids and disturbances occur. Thus armed raids and murders have taken place on the Abyssinian frontier, on the further side of which a dangerous condition of lawlessness exists. Remonstrances have been addressed to the Emperor Menelek, and the forces for controlling the border are to be increased.

Sir Eldon Gorst reports in the following terms on the question of

SLAVERY.

Lord Cromer in his last Report referred to the serious difficulties which must be encountered before the institution of slavery can be completely eradicated. I have little to add on the subject. At present the Soudan Government, with the small military force at their disposal, have to content themselves with governing the more remote regions to a great extent through their native rulers, and with encouraging, by means of the advice and influence of the local officials, the gradual introduction of a civilized form of administration. Major Ravenscroft, Assistant Director of the Slave Trade Department, recently visited southern Kordofan, and a detachment will

* Egypt—(No. 1.—1908)

shortly be stationed by the Department at Eliri. Patrols will be despatched from this point towards the north-western districts of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, principally with the object of watching the main slave route, which is said to pass through the districts of Sultan Bangassu, Senussi, and Gabab (French Congo) and northwards through Kafia-Kingi and Kabalugu (Bahr-el-Ghazal). The detachment stationed at Roseires is doing good work, and permanent posts have been established on both sides of the Blue Nile. The posts in the Red Sea Province are reported to have succeeded in practically stopping the export of slaves from the coast.

From the reports of the Provinces we gather that the slave question causes less difficulty than it did. The condition of Southern Kordofan has considerably improved owing to more troops, better communication, and the introduction of an elementary system of administration, and the same is true of the Bahr-el-Ghazal and other provinces. Captain Lloyd reports from Kordofan that "the great grievance with all Arabs is want of slaves, which is increasing now that every black man can claim his freedom as a right without compensation to his owner." Labour is a difficulty in some other provinces also. The buying and selling of slaves has ceased in the Berber province. In the Upper Nile province the permission given to a few trustworthy Greek and Gellaba merchants, carefully chosen, to enter the Nuer country and trade, has "helped to establish confidence and to eradicate the old idea that commerce and slave-raiding are synonymous."

Of slavery in the White Nile province Mr. Butler writes:—

"The knowledge that any ill-treatment of the slave by the master will result in the slave complaining to the nearest Government authority and in his subsequent manumission has compelled the masters to deal leniently with their slaves. The lot of the domestic slave, indeed, is far better than that of many wage earners; he is well-fed and clothed and treated more as a member of the family of his master than as a dependent."

In the report on Egypt, Sir Eldon Gorst reminds us that Lord Cromer occupied the position of H. M. Representative in that country for 24 years, and the work which he accomplished belongs to the domain of history. His departure in May, 1907, therefore marked an epoch in the annals of modern Egypt. Sir Eldon Gorst adds that proof of the solidity of the foundations upon which Lord Cromer laid his work is found in the determination of all those who co-operated with him, both Egyptians and Europeans, to maintain intact the edifice which he built up.

In view of the interesting information which Lord Cromer gives in the second volume of his important work, *Modern Egypt*, as to the difficulties which had to be encountered in the abolition of the Corvée system, and the impossibility of dispensing altogether with the calling out of Corvée labour

for guarding the banks of the Nile during the flood, to avoid inundation, it is interesting to learn that the number of men called out last year, was in Upper Egypt 11,383, and in Lower Egypt 769, for 100 days. The period of 100 days is only used for comparison, as the actual time was much less. In Lower Egypt the numbers are said to be remarkable, even in a year of low flood, in comparison with the figures of the past.

Lord Cromer on Slavery in Egypt.—I.

"Some arguments, more or less specious, can generally be found to defend most of the worst abuses which exist, or at times have existed, in the world. The Slave trade stands alone as an abomination which is incapable of any defence whatsoever, unless it be the vicious plea that Pashas require servants and that they are unable to obtain them in sufficient numbers or at a sufficiently low price by any other means."

*—Modern Egypt by the EARL OF CROMER.**

IN the profoundly interesting and important work which Lord Cromer has lately given to the world on the modern history of Egypt, with which his name is so closely and so honourably connected, frequent reference is made—as might be expected from the pressing nature of the question in Egypt and the Soudan a quarter of a century ago—to the subject of slavery and slave trading. The Anti-Slavery Society was constantly occupied with this question in the years 1882-4, for by the British Convention with Egypt of 1877 the sale of negro slaves was to cease in Egypt in 1884, and five years later in the Egyptian Soudan. Lord Cromer's energy in opposing slavery is well known to the world from his official reports and his whole policy as British representative in that country, and we are not surprised to read the strong terms in which he reprobates the trade and the practices of slavery in these volumes.

We have quoted above his characterization of the slave trade. Domestic slavery, though distinct, is closely connected with the trade, and in order to check that, if for no other reason, it is, Lord Cromer declares, necessary to do all that is possible to discourage slavery. The English reformer in Egypt has tried both to cut off the supply by preventing slaves from being brought in, and also to diminish the demand by weaning the slave-owning classes from their habits.

But Lord Cromer tells us that the obstacles in 1883 to carrying out the abolition of slavery were "practically insurmountable." It would, he says, have been impossible or highly imprudent, at that time, to try

to follow the precedent in India of 1843. But a great change has gone on insensibly. No heroic measures were adopted, or anything to clash with Mahomedan prejudices, with the result that much success has been attained. The 1877 Convention was, in Lord Cromer's opinion, admirably adapted to achieve, in an unostentatious manner, the object for which it was intended. He describes the opposition to abolition in Egypt as mild, and puts down its gradual disappearance to Lord Vivian's "wise moderation" in that Convention. A fresh Convention in regard to Slavery was drawn up by the efforts of Lord Cromer and Sir John Scott in 1895. It will be remembered that in 1884, the year in which the sale of slaves became illegal, the Home for Freed Women Slaves in Cairo was founded, largely under the auspices of the Anti-Slavery Society.

The following passage from the second volume of *Modern Egypt*, on the general question, is of interest:—

"It would probably be an exaggeration to say that any public opinion adverse to slavery has been evoked in Egypt. The purchase and employment of slaves is not generally regarded with any moral reprobation, neither, under all the circumstances which exist, would it be reasonable to expect any such reprobation. In 1894, no less a person than the President of the Legislative Council, who was a Turco-Egyptian, was arraigned before a court-martial for purchasing slaves, and only escaped imprisonment on account of his bad health and advanced years. Nevertheless, the slavery reforms instituted under British auspices have produced a notable change in the behaviour, if not the opinions, of the slave-owning classes in Egypt. There are no longer any slave markets. The purchase of a slave is a criminal offence, attended with danger both to buyer and seller. The slave routes are carefully watched. It is only with great difficulty that a few slaves are occasionally smuggled into the country. The result of these measures has been not only that it has become year by year more difficult to obtain slaves, but that also, when any clandestine purchase is effected, a price considerably higher than that which formerly ruled has to be paid. The slave owner is, therefore, beginning to ask himself whether slave labour is not, after all, more expensive as well as more troublesome than free labour, and whether it is worth while, besides committing a criminal act for which he may be severely punished, to pay a considerable sum for a slave girl who can, on the morrow of her purchase, walk out of the harem and obtain not only her freedom, but also the strong support of the British representative if any attempt is made to tamper with her liberty of action.

Thousands of slaves have during the last few years been granted their certificates of freedom. Those who remain in the harem know that they can obtain their liberty if they choose to ask for it. In the meanwhile, as very few fresh slaves are imported, and as the numbers born in slavery must certainly be inconsiderable in proportion to the number of those who have

been manumitted, the supply of slaves is gradually falling short of the demand. Very few eunuchs are now to be found in Egypt. . . .

It may safely be asserted that slavery in Egypt, although it will take a long time to die out completely, is moribund. It may be asserted with an almost equal degree of confidence that both the slave trade and slavery would revive if vigilance were relaxed."

Another passage to which we would refer our readers is that on the abolition of the Corvée, or forced labour system, by which a large proportion of the Egyptian people in certain districts were annually called out to dredge the mud out of the canals for irrigation purposes. Grave difficulties had to be encountered, scientific knowledge employed, and great expense faced in order to put down the traditional system, and though it has not yet been found possible to abolish the Corvée completely, as it is still called out for guarding the Nile banks when the river is high, to avoid inundation, the number of men is steadily diminishing, and we may, with Lord Cromer, account this to be "not the least praiseworthy of the humanitarian acts accomplished by our Government in the teeth of strong opposition."

(To be continued.)



Parliamentary.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, June 25th.

RED SEA SLAVERY.

Mr. J. W. WILSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty for what periods during the last year British guard ships have been withdrawn from the port of Aden: whether he will enquire if their absence has resulted in an increase of the slave trade in the southern part of the Red Sea; and whether he will make arrangements for the guard ships to be again stationed there?

Mr. MCKENNA: There is no permanent guard ship at Aden; but one of His Majesty's ships on the East Indian station is generally there. During the last year Aden has been without a ship for a period of five and a-half months, an unusually long period, for which there were exceptional reasons. No information has been received which would point to an increase of the slave trade having taken place in the southern part of the Red Sea, but inquiries will be made on this point. The movements of His Majesty's ships are determined by the requirements of the service, and any circumstances requiring the presence of a ship at Aden will be duly taken into account by the Commander-in-Chief.

The Congo Question.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.*

THE correspondence published in the first of these White Papers, relates chiefly to the subject of securing new sites for Mission Stations. The British Minister protested in strong terms that the way in which the Congo Government had dealt with this question constituted a practical disregard of treaty rights, and an assurance was then given that, if annexation of the Congo State by Belgium were delayed, the question would be dealt with promptly.

A despatch from Vice-Consul Michell relates to the Congo Government's reply to his previous report, and contains some interesting remarks :—

" TAXATION.—On this subject, on which I have already reported more than once, I will only say here; (1) The native is far from idle; as a rule he is physically unable, and the climate and conditions of his existence unfit him for sustained hard labour; and (2) there is nothing ennobling in mere forced labour, without profit or progress or prospect of advancement. It is stated on p. 196: 'It is work which has prevented the native from falling into the violences of barbarism, the remembrance, and perhaps the regret, for which he has preserved. Idleness infallibly leads him back to it.' And 'To inculcate in the native the taste for work, a remuneration is granted to him in exchange for his contribution in produce or in labour.'

" It is difficult for those who have not seen it to realise the sordid poverty, the hard life, and the constant dangers, the severity of the climatic conditions, in which the native lives. He owns no more than do the beasts of the forest. Hunting, fishing, and planting are dangerous and toilsome. Those who imagine that the Congolese has only to lie on his back and let the fruits drop into his mouth are strangely mistaken. Considering all things, the native blacksmiths, basket-makers, weavers, wood-men, canoe-makers, net-makers, fishermen, hunters, etc., perform an astonishing amount of work in the most intelligent and skilful manner. The women, too, are constantly employed in tilling the ground (which the men clear of the bush), making pottery, preparing food, etc. The native feels the climate as much as the White man, and is less able to resist the sun, the damp, the poisons and the fevers and other diseases in his naked, ill-fed, ill-protected and ignorant condition. These kill off 50 per cent. of the children, and another 25 per cent. before they reach manhood. In fact, none survive but the very pick of the people, and the bodies of these bear the marks of the severe trials through which they have passed."

Another despatch from Consul Thesiger deals with the failure of the Administration to introduce coinage.

* Africa No. 2. (1908); No. 3. (1908).

"The present system is too profitable from the labour point of view, and too economical when the tax is paid in foodstuffs at a fraction of their real value. . . . As regards his indebtedness to the State, money to any but the Mission-employed native is useless. The power to introduce money and cash payments into the Upper Congo lies in the hands of the State alone. . . . The money question has a very important bearing on the condition of the native population and their relation to the Administration, and the State, while outwardly expressing their anxiety to spread the use of coined money over the whole Congo, have neglected all steps which would render such a thing possible."

Another despatch gives an account from the Rev. A. Stonelake, of the Baptist Missionary Society at Kinchasa, of the hardships of the tax in chikwangue, the portage of which falls on the women and young children in the Stanley Pool District contrary to the law. Mr. Stonelake wrote (August, 1907) :—

"I have nothing to say against the officials at Leopoldville as men. They have some 1,800 people to feed over there, and it keeps the people of the village perpetually occupied preparing the food. The fault is with the head in Belgium, who seems to sleep neither day nor night in devising plans by which to enrich himself out of these people, and who yet absolutely refuses to import the food for their sustenance. The sooner the system is altered the better. Indeed, I almost doubt whether the change will not come too late."

The second White Paper contains the important despatches in which Sir Edward Grey explained to the British Minister at Brussels the attitude of His Majesty's Government to the proposed annexation of the Congo State by Belgium. After referring in the first letter to an interview with the Belgian Minister, Sir E. Grey declared in his letter of March 27th that—

"The existing administration of the Congo State has not fulfilled the objects for which the State was originally recognised or the conditions of treaties, and that changes are therefore required which should effect (1), relief of the natives from excessive taxation; (2), the grant to the natives of sufficient land to ensure their ability to obtain not only the food they require, but also sufficient produce of the soil to enable them to buy and sell, as in other European Colonies; (3), the possibility for traders, whatever their nationality may be, to acquire plots of land of reasonable dimensions in any part of the Congo for the erection of factories, so as to enable them to establish direct trade relations with the natives."

Referring to the Report of the Commission of Inquiry of 1905, Sir E. Grey said that "the burden of taxation remains as oppressive as ever, although cases of actual cruelty have largely ceased, and amount, in fact, to a system of forced labour, differing in name only from slavery," and

irreconcilable with Article VI. of the Berlin Act. He then referred to the rights of the Concessionary Companies (which Belgium intended to respect in their entirety) as being inconsistent with freedom of trade, since, under present conditions, the native will continue to be debarred from enjoying the fruits of the soil, and urged the necessity of "a radical alteration of the economic system of the territory." Sir E. Grey proceeded to urge the speedy introduction of a currency into the State, the prohibition of compulsion of native labour, and a liberal increase in the land allotted to them; these three reforms to be introduced concurrently.

The various points were dealt with in detail in the lengthy Memorandum enclosed with this despatch. Sir E. Grey began by adverting to the rubber monopolies, and the exclusion of the natives from all benefits arising from the exploitation of the soil. Taxation in labour, while not wrong in itself, is liable to give rise to abuses. In British Colonies it has never been regarded as more than a provisional and temporary expedient, pending the introduction of a better system; but the converse is the case on the Congo. The Memorandum then dealt with the application of the labour tax, and the evils due to the absence of a currency which resulted in the natives receiving utterly inadequate remuneration for their labour. The reports of the British Consuls are quoted to show the burdensome character of the tax in foodstuffs, which has imposed incessant compulsory labour upon the men and women who have to supply it, and, above all, of the rubber tax, which, in Vice-Consul Beak's words, "involves hardships in comparison with which those of the corvée and transport are insignificant," and "which the native loathes more than anything else." The Secretary of State laid great stress upon the importance of a currency, the introduction of which, coupled with freedom of trade, would, in his opinion, almost infallibly deal a death-blow to the Concessionary Companies and their rubber monopolies. After alluding to the incessant labour demanded under the forty-hours-a-month law, Sir E. Grey wrote:—

"There is no need to further multiply instances in order to show that the condition of the natives of the Congo is still one of veiled slavery, notwithstanding the assurances given by the Secretaries-General in their report to the King-Sovereign, and of the reform decrees.

"It is impossible to escape the suspicion that, while pretending to introduce real measures of reform by the decrees of June 3rd, 1906, every effort was made to render those decrees illusory, and to perpetuate the system of bondage and slavery, in order to swell the profits of the monopoly system. . . .

"There is a point upon which his Majesty's Government wish in conclusion to lay particular emphasis. It is that the taxes in labour which have in the past been exacted from the natives by the Concessionary Companies

have been largely devoted, not to objects of public utility, but to the furtherance of private interests. The amount of labour which has been, and in a certain measure still is, devoted to those ends, can, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, only be expressed in unqualified terms as slavery pure and simple."

The Memorandum of the Belgian Minister, which purports to reply to that of Sir A. Hardinge deals in little else than vague promises. It ends by thus summarizing the plans of the Government, when they assume responsibility before the world for the Congo State:—

"An immediate amelioration in the moral and material conditions of existence of the inhabitants of the Congo, and the extension, as rapidly as possible, of a system of economic freedom to the different regions of that vast country."

Negotiations between our Government and Belgium are still going on, and the Foreign Minister, M. Davignon, has referred to a new British memorandum which has been received as being "couched in the most benevolent terms."

Native Affairs in Natal.

THE state of affairs in Natal, especially in regard to the position of Dinuzulu, as shown in the Parliamentary Papers* recently published, is in the highest degree unsatisfactory. The correspondence included in these volumes gives a bad impression of the state of feeling in the Colony and the character of the justice which is being meted out to Dinuzulu, in spite of the inquiries and protests of the Home Government, which have been practically disregarded.

Early in February Lord Elgin telegraphed to the Governor of Natal, suggesting that he should select a leading barrister to defend Dinuzulu, and stated that there was great uneasiness here as to the methods of procedure adopted for formulating a specific charge, and the difficulties which appeared to be thrown in the way of the defence. The curt answers of Natal Ministers to repeated inquiries of this kind have done nothing to remove that uneasiness. On May 5th, the Governor telegraphed that it was not possible to give a date even for the conclusion of the so-called preliminary examination which has dragged on for so long, it being four and a half months, as Lord Crewe pointed out at the end of April, since Dinuzulu's surrender. Lord Crewe had also suggested the desirability of avoiding delay by allowing the defence to obtain evidence from Zululand; this permission, however, is still refused. The charges of inciting to murder and high treason brought against Dinuzulu appear to be of

*Cd. 3998, &c Cd. 4001.

the vaguest kind, and fully warrant the requests of the Colonial Office for more information. It is a very insufficient answer to the question of the Secretary of State, founded upon the serious and circumstantial allegations of Mr. Jellicoe, as to "coercion under martial law to sign depositions, and brow-beating of witnesses in Court," simply to assert as the Natal Ministers have done that "any allegations of coercion under martial law to sign depositions would be . . . entirely baseless. Accusation of brow-beating in Court would be equally untrue." Colonel Seely has admitted in the House of Commons that it is deplorable that this great native chief should remain so long without a definite charge being framed.

Many pages are occupied by the depositions of various native witnesses against Dinuzulu, and it is impossible to resist the impression that this sort of "preliminary examination" might be indefinitely spun out, while the Natal Government unfortunately resisted every suggestion from the Colonial Office for taking such measures as would "arrest agitation" and "silence criticism," denying the direct responsibility of His Majesty's Government for Natal procedure, and declining to admit even the intervention of the Governor as "Supreme Chief."

The Government is shown to have adopted a firm attitude as to the continued payment of Dinuzulu's salary of £500 a year, in spite of the urgent and repeated request of the Ministers that it should be suspended, on the simple ground that the Chief "must be assumed to be innocent until he is proved to be guilty," and that its suspension would seem to prejudge the case. But on May 21st the Governor telegraphed to the Secretary of State, in reply to a question on the subject, that the Chief's salary had been stopped and that the matter was coming before the Supreme Court. Lord Crewe expressed his surprise and telegraphed for further information. It is stated that the case cannot go for trial until October. Meanwhile we learn from the discussion in the House of Commons that the Government do not mean to neglect their honourable obligation which is plain, and is based on the understanding arrived at between them and the Natal Government in 1898 that Dinuzulu should draw his salary during good behaviour, and in no case should be deprived of this salary without the approval of the Secretary of State.

The Government regard Dinuzulu as "specially under their charge," and inasmuch as Natal has broken their part of the agreement the position is one of no little difficulty. The Attorney-General has stated that "it was literally and legally the case that the salary of Dinuzulu was a condition of the incorporation of Zululand with Natal"; Natal accepted that condition, and "there was no doubt whatever of the right

of Dinuzulu to his salary until the Secretary of State had signified that he approved of its withdrawal or suspension."

Other important questions which are discussed in these papers relate to the continuance of martial law in Zululand—which both the Imperial Government and the Governor have sought to bring to an end—the flogging of natives under that law, the differences of Miss Colenso with the authorities, and the release of the rebel prisoners. Of these last all but 116 have now been released, and the Governor stated in March last that he had asked that the revision of these sentences should be considered.

The opposite extremes of opinion on native affairs in Natal are represented on the one side by the letters of Mr. E. G. Jellicoe to Sir M. Nathan and to Lord Elgin, explaining why he threw up the defence of Dinuzulu and left Natal, and urging that the accused Chief should be brought to England for trial, and on the other by a speech made in March by the Prime Minister of Natal, justifying all that had been done in Zululand, and expressing strong resentment at the criticisms passed on the Natal Government by English Members of Parliament.

Mr. Jellicoe's letters travel over a wide range of subjects, his chief points being that "European land-grab" is at the bottom of the native troubles in Natal; that the proceedings against Dinuzulu are a travesty of justice, the presiding magistrate being alleged to terrorise native witnesses and openly influence them to give evidence damaging to the Chief. The Natal Ministers have declared that Mr. Jellicoe's statements were patently false and his letter "too contemptible for notice" by them.

In April the Colonial Secretary informed Mr. Jellicoe that he could not be the channel for communicating to the Governor of Natal the charges which he brought against the Colonial Government, and, further, that it would not be possible to remove Dinuzulu to this country for trial.

The Prime Minister of Natal contends that the Colony could have adopted no other course than to "show her mailed fist in Zululand" in order to put down crime, and that the unrest has now vanished. The strong language which he proceeded to use as to the members of the Imperial Parliament who have dared to "interfere" in Natal affairs is highly regrettable, and can do nothing but further embitter feeling, which is already deeply stirred, among those who regard the position in Natal with grave concern.

An application was made earlier in the year by Dinuzulu's counsel to the Supreme Court for an injunction to restrain the magistrate from proceeding further with the examination. This has been refused on the ground that there was no jurisdiction and that the charges of treason and illegality had not been proved. The judgment of the Chief Justice is given